42. Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

supernatural for the time to come. Nature, however, is not theirs to direct; they know this all too well, and so why bother about the future. Besides, there will always be something to eat, there is no winter in the tropics, vegetation is luxuriant, and the Isneg are not particular. Nature is ruled by the supernatural, not by human beings. All the latter can do is to influence the supernatural. Man has no direct control over rain and sunshine, sickness and death, but the spirits have; and these have to be moved to pity or to be frightened into submission, as the case may be.

An Isneg will say: "What is the use of medicine? If it has been decreed that a person will die, he will do so, medicines or no medicines". But nevertheless he will comply with all possible prescriptions of the shaman, and if the person dies notwithstanding all precautions have been taken to protect him from the spirits, then: "It was his fate", and that ends the matter.

If the locusts are devastating the fields, an Isneg will resign himself to his fate. He has worked diligently, he has observed all possible omens and has broken no taboos; why should he worry, why should he try to destroy these pests. The Government will force him to do so of course, and he will obey as long as he remains under the eagle eye of his rulers, but he will say: "What is the use; if we destroy these, others will take their place, provided it be decreed that way: and if not, it is perfectly useless to tire ourselves for nothing".

Such and similar states of mind are not confined to the Isneg. I remember very well how on a certain occasion, in 1914, I was assisting an Ilоko Christian on his deathbed. Wanting to impress upon him the great necessity of a deep sorrow for his sins, I described to him as vividly as possible the horrors of hell, and told him how anxious he should be to avoid an eternity of such pains and torments; but his only answer was an act of absolute conformity to the Divine Will: "If God wants me to go to hell, I am perfectly willing". And that man was far from wanting to be disrespectful to the Deity; his words simply illustrated how little he cared about what the future had in store for him. Pagan Isneg lay the blame for every untoward happening, either merely on fate, or on the intervention of some ill-intentioned imp, while a happy turn of events is usually considered to be the result either of fate pure and simple, or of some special clever means by which the machinations of the spirits have been counteracted. Nowadays the Government, the Ibanag as they call all Christians, has generally to bear the blame of any public calamity

[721]

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

know how to keep *Talomásim* at a distance, in the case of this nameless spirit they are absolutely powerless: the only way for a young Isneg mother to avoid him is to stay in the house at night.

Fire (*apúy*) plays a very important role whenever a new Isneg citizen has been born on our planet. Leaving aside the question of the place of the mother near the hearth of the house which has just been mentioned, I should like to draw attention to the following:

1. Although, even under ordinary circumstances, the fire of the hearth is rarely extinguished completely, it is of paramount importance that it should not be let go out for a single moment during the whole period that immediately follows the birth of a child, which period lasts until the mother has recovered sufficient strength to move around freely, in fact, I believe, as long as the mother has to sleep near the hearth at night.

2. At least on the first day, that is before the child is one day old, it is absolutely forbidden for anybody to take fire or firebrands (*alitán*) from the hearth: this is strictly taboo (*kanuáw*).

3. No alien fire may be brought inside the house on that day.

4. Three other taboos have also probably to do with the respect shown to fire on such an occasion: again at least during the first day, it is strictly forbidden to use green bamboos (*namáta ńa bólo*) to feed the fire. The same prohibition is extended to the passing of green leaves over the fire in order to soften them: this is very often done with young banana leaves, young palm leaves, etc. that will be used for packing and other purposes; the fire renders them very supple and easily pliable, in such a way preventing them from splitting at every turn. A third taboo concerns anything green (*namáta*), not dry: nothing of the kind is allowed to be brought into the house. Should any of these three taboos be infringed, the Isneg firmly believe that the babe will become thin and emaciated, it will be *malandtān*.

A woman in childbed, wherever she be situated inside the house, is assisted by all women who belong to the same household, and even little girls are allowed to witness the birth of a child. Experienced old women of the neighborhood are called in to take the lion's share in bringing the event to a happy issue, in some places always, in others whenever the inmates of the house prove incapable of the task or when the mother has much difficulty in bringing forth her baby. Midwives are called *mańa-lón* in Isneg.

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

854 As soon as the mother is allowed to attend to her ordinary duties,
431 her first concern is to take her child and visit her relatives, her own
796 as well as those of her husband. These are then obliged by custom to give the little one a small bracelet, which consists in a string of beads and is called *battá-*. In each house that is entered for that purpose, one such *battá-* is placed over the wrist of the babe. Besides, the relatives who live in the same settlement with the parents of the child, have to perform the *maxaníto* ceremony (communication with the spirits), at which a chicken is offered by the shaman, before the arrival of mother and child. This *maxaníto*, however, is dispensed with in the case of people who live in different agglomerations.

853 The mother (*magtaxíbi*) gives her child (*taxíbi*) the breast (*magpasóso*; in Ilоko, *sóso* means "breast"; in Isneg "breast" is *xátat*) at every turn, and the little one has always its mother's milk at its disposition. No sooner does the baby cry than this is done, since, for an Isneg, the only plausible explanation is that it is hungry As a rule, a child suckles its mother's breasts as long as it has not cut its first tooth, but even then you cannot call it really weaned: a little youngster running around freely may sometimes be seen partaking
[262] of the same food as his newborn brother or sister. On the other hand the little babe is given cooked rice to eat very early, usually after five days; however, as a matter of course, this solid food has been chewed by the complacent parent before it is put into the infant's mouth.

854 The baby when at rest is lying down either stretched out on a mat or a piece of cloth on the floor, or more frequently in a *dóyan*, which is a rectangular piece of cloth doubled up lengthwise so as to form a kind of pouch, each end of which is suspended from some part of the house, like a hammock, by means of two strings or strips of rattan, so that it can be used as a swing.

854 If Isneg parents have to leave a little child alone in the house,
776 they usually confide it to the care of *Daraxodán*, a kind spirit, who is always at hand in such a predicament: he looks after the babe, without its elders knowing anything about it, and the little one never cries as long as he remains with it. Another spirit, *Laglagtmiń*, who has the shape of a bird, is supposed to bring up any babies who are not well cared for by their parents; but although such children do not
[753] die while *Laglagtmiń* looks after them, they always remain thin and
856] emaciated, which, of course, the Isneg do not consider as an ideal condition for an infant.

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

Iloko, means "communication, participation"; but in Isneg the term is very hard to translate. I shall give a couple of examples to illustrate its meaning: 761 192

In the case of death by accident, e.g., falling from a coconut tree: *neránud xapó kiyá iyúq*, he died (!) on account of the coconut tree.

Christian Isneg explain Christian martyrdom in the same way: *ni San Pedro neránud xapó kiyá ápó Dios*, St. Peter died (!) on account of (or: for) the Lord God.

Students say: *ni Rizal neránud xapó kiyá ilina*, Rizal (the Filipino hero executed by the Spaniards in 1896) died (!) on account of (or: for) his country.

The other kind of death, which is obviously the most frequent and ordinary one, I call "supernatural" because the Isneg ascribe its cause to the intervention of the spirits. Death, in this case, is caused by the loss of the kidneys (*bokál*): some spirit, who is certainly to be classed under the malevolent ones, deprives a person of his kidneys and devours them, death being the inevitable result. 761 753 776

Among the spirits that are addicted to this destructive practice may be cited:

Libuwát, who lives in bushy thickets;

Xasilá- or *Xasilaw:* after having devoured the kidneys, this spirit besmears with blood the leaves of the trees and herbs that grow on the mountain on which he has fixed his abode;

Ápó, who devours the kidneys of people who die of what we call dysentery;

Mañlatóñ: this is the real angel of death; he does away with the kidneys of all people who die on that account, except of course those that have been bereft of their kidneys by some other spirit. *Mañlatóñ* kills all those that are spurned by others, he is the kidney-eater and executioner *par excellence*.

The error of such a belief might easily be ascertained, but autopsy is unknown among the Isneg, and so it stands. The better to understand Isneg mentality, it should be borne in mind that sickness as such is never considered as the sole or immediate cause of death, and this for obvious reasons. The Isneg know only diseases that appear outwardly, as skin diseases (*busí* "tetter", *rasá*, "itch"), *daxdñ*, "fever", dysentery, beriberi, and so on, while diseases with no or only slight outward signs are entirely unknown to the natives. And so if a person dies from cardiopathy, pneumonia, diabetes, etc., the Isneg do not doubt for a single moment that some ill-minded imp [763]

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

must have intervened. With reference to the former class of ailments, some of them never cause death, except if they are coupled with further complications, while in the rest the symptoms (as passing of blood in dysentery, general swelling of the body in beriberi) are considered as the visible effect of the work initiated by a spirit inside the body.

In the same way, whenever some dangerous sickness fails to prove fatal and is overcome either by the strong constitution of the patient, or by some medicine, the Isneg attribute the cure, not to its real cause, but to the superior force of some spirit in league with the shaman, or to magic, all of which has subdued for the time being or completely driven away the terrible kidney-eater, who on that account has been unable to finish the work he began.

After what has been said here, it should not be wondered at that doctors and nurses have a very difficult time with these people, who have little or no faith in their ministrations and consider medicines as either operating through magic (in case of a cure) or entirely useless. Most of the time, however, medicines are given no credit at all, and the cure is merely attributed to the work of the shaman, whose help is always invoked, even in those rare cases in which recourse has been had to natural means.

Suicide (*magbanól*, "to commit suicide") must be listed in the second class: its victims are supposed to die through the action of a kidney-hunter. Suicide, however, by hanging oneself (*magpatól*) or otherwise, not by jumping into the water (*malimát*, "to be drowned"), is rare among the Isneg. I know of only one case in recent times: a few years ago a person hanged himself at Utul, but I have not been able to discover the reason. Drowning oneself would certainly be shunned by Isneg, on account of the probability of the *inndt* being lost and deprived of its necessary preparation for the acceptance of the *kaduduwá* by *Kútaw*. It is universally believed by the natives that the relatives of a person who died by drowning, whether voluntary or accidental, will continually dream about him at night; this seems to be a kind of revenge on the part of the deceased, probably out of spite for encountering so many difficulties on his way to the other world. That is one of the reasons why the Isneg so sedulously try to find the body of a drowned person even for weeks at a time; if the body is recovered and buried, no such dreams affect the relatives of the deceased.

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

763 In general, it is said of a person who dies without anybody being aware of it (*maáñaw*), whether by drowning or otherwise, that some part of his body will invariably appear in his house, and that the said part will tell the relatives the name of the deceased and the news of his death.

761 Death by cursing is also to be classified under the same heading. Indeed the Isneg never call it by the term *meránud*, and the kidneys 754 of a person who dies on that account, are supposed to have been devoured as usual. Consequently it seems that, according to the Isneg viewpoint, the curse is not so much the immediate cause of death as a kind of summons to the spirits, by which they are invited to proceed to the stealing of a person's kidneys. To curse (*pakkawán;* past tense: *piíkawán;* from the stem *pakkáw*, "shouting") is done shouting, and in such a way as to cause the adversary to hear the curse pronounced against him. The result is instantaneous; the cursed person gradually becomes thinner and thinner, and finally dies. Nevertheless not all curses are intended to entail the death of a person. It may happen, for instance, if you are a thief, that people will pray that some part of your body become diseased or destroyed; in this case you will be *malbág*, and the person who cursed you is said to *manaddál* (to destroy, to deteriorate).

761 To resume: the Isneg consider all deaths from disease (including suicide and death by cursing) to be caused by a kidney-eating spirit, 753 while deaths by accident or by violence are considered as natural, there being at the same time a kind of connection between death and the object or person that took part in it, either because this object or person constitutes a kind of mediate (the coconut tree from which a person falls) or immediate cause (the authorities who execute a culprit, a headhunter who kills an enemy), or because it is the final cause, *causa finalis* (God, in the case of a martyr; one's country, in the case of a patriot). All deaths by accident or by violence, except [682] felonious homicide, come under the denomination *meránud*.

B. BURIAL AND MOURNING

1. Death till Burial

763 Let us now enter the house of a dying Isneg. The poor man is very sick, it has even been rumored about that he is actually very 755 near death, that he can hardly articulate a sound (*mañgassát*). The *dorarákit* or shamaness has used all means in her power to avert the

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Imeg

776 764 *Buńdd:* a spirit who invariably approaches the house at the death of one of its inmates. He looks like a big tree, and at his arrival the whole house shakes.

Xánat: a kind of giant who is to be seen roaming around, either at the house of a dead person, or along some road leading to it.

Tuktukkál: a whole swarm of spirits who come to mourn and weep at the house of a dead person, especially if the latter is a child.

[851 753] The Isneg strictly forbid all children to play noisily anywhere in the settlement where an *inádt* is awaiting burial; if any youngster should disobey this injunction, he would invariably become afflicted with *bońkál* (wens).

765 A person who arrives from some other agglomeration bringing in a new jar at the time a corpse is present in one of the houses, may be sure not to be able to enjoy the use of his jar for a long time: the latter is *ma-dammán.*

764 As has been stated previously, the body has to be watched night and day. At night, when most of the mourners are sleeping, from one to three persons must always remain awake, and when the latter feel very sleepy, others must take their place, lest the punishment which has already been referred to be meted out to one of their number.

In case the deceased is a married man, the widow (*bálo*) has to stay near the corpse of her husband, as soon as the body has been dressed and placed in the required position, and she has to remain there until one night after burial. For this purpose a diminutive tent (*aróbón*) is put up near the head of the dead person, on the other side of the post, toward the hearth (fig. 3). This *aróbón* usually consists of a couple of boards for the sides and a blanket for the cover, the whole outfit leaning against the wall of the house. Only men take part in fixing the *aróbón.* The widow has to stay inside all the time, she remains invisible, and she neither weeps nor laments, at least not in a loud voice: if she does so, her sobs should remain inaudible or almost so. There she partakes of the food that is pushed in by her relatives, and there she sleeps. Since the *aróbón* is comparatively small, it is quite impossible for her ever to stretch her legs. If she has to go out for some urgent reason, a board is taken out of the wall, which is not at all difficult in Isneg houses, and a ladder is placed against it. As soon as the woman leaves the house through this improvised door, she has to wrap herself up completely in another blanket, and to reenter as soon as possible. In some places she

44: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1941 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

787 intricate and obviously of rather rare occurrence: this is probably the
825 reason why such an unusual way of flying has rendered it suspicious to the natives. It happens like this: the bird flies first from right to left, and then from left to right, in front of the person who is on its way to the field; after that it flies first from front to rear, and then from rear to front, at the right-hand side. This fourfold movement of the *labág*-bird is called *magsúñit*.

If, after having begun (*sumikáp*, " to start work ") any kind of work in the field, you happen to see a buzzard (*bukkáw*) for the first time, or a rat (*butít*) any time, stop then and there, return home and stay here for the rest of the day. As may be seen by the above statement, there is a considerable difference between the two: indeed, a *bukkáw* or buzzard sends you home only when it is seen for the first time, while a rat keeps you idle for a day whenever it makes an appearance.

776 There are a few other things of importance, which it is very useful
753 for the Isneg to know.

For instance, if you happen to meet the spirit *Gabburá* on your way to work and he jumps out in front of you, you may be sure that you will become ill in the near future. Then it is up to you to take your precautions as soon as you come back home.

The influence of the spirit *Barôyan* is also very nefarious: should he accompany you on your way, you will be unable to perform anything worth while and your body will be aching all over; in some cases he has even caused people to become completely mad.

784 Never walk over the first plant or seed which you confided to the soil, whether it be rice or tobacco or anything else, because, if you are careless in this respect, not a single plant will grow in that particular field or garden of yours.

When you reach home, after having planted (*magmúla*, *mulán*) something, never take hold of a *báña* [18] in such a way as to insert your hand or your fingers (*magkuwál*). When it is absolutely necessary to take up a *báña*, be careful to touch it only at the outside, otherwise whatever you have planted will be consumed sooner or later by wild animals.

824 An Isneg who wants to become skilled in planting (*aragmúla*) must
787 try as much as possible to observe what follows:

[18] An earthen jar used for cooking rice, etc.

Ewagan, Jimalingan, Banwaran, and *Diaban* are called upon in time of sickness, and *Barangseo* helps one to run away if some enemy is trying to kill him, while *Anglabang* will help him kill his enemy. *Lecay* kills other *anitos.* 776

Among the evil *anitos Pungal* is best known and most feared. He causes sickness and death. People always obey him. *Ademat* also gives a fatal illness; while *Kapunan* gives sudden death by hemorrhage. *Anguan* hunts men with dogs and gives one a headache from which he may die. *Dangquico, Makel,* and *Kilang* move the winds that kill instantly. 776 753 [821]

Kakayan teaches and tempts people to do evil, and *Anlabbang* causes quarrels; while *Duman* steals beads. *Darantan* lives in the river and is the one who makes a person drown. *Aliang* lives along the streams and entices small children away. Occasionally one see his peculiar foor prints in the sand. *Wirwer* digs up the dead corpse and eats it. 776

There are also various ghosts, giants, and fairies. *Balongobangs* are evil revivals of the dead corpses who cannot bend their legs. They catch people and tear them to bits. One can tell them at night by their nauseous bad odor. Then is the time to run away from that place quicker than possible.

The *Gaggag* are giants who live in the forest and can make themselves into animals. If one even says their name, they will rush out and kill him. They have green blood in their bodies and red blood is only in their heads. So one must hit a *Gaggag* in the head in order to kill him.

796 smallest feast is the *pespes*, given at the beginning of harvest, or for a sick child. Only a chicken or maybe, a pig is killed. After eating, the people go to the field and work until quite dark. A coconut is divided and half left for the field. The other half is eaten on arriving home.

755 [753] A *coglot*, given to an *anito* for the recovery of a sick person, deserves further mention. If one of the family becomes sick, they think that the spirit of the sick one has wandered away and been caught by some *anito*. They call for one or more priestesses according to their wealth. This priestess holds a consultation to discover, either which *anito* is keeping the spirit, or which *anito* to ask to go and take the spirit away from the evil *anito*, and thus bring the sick back to health.

Upon deciding which *anito* to call, they tie a live [757] pig at the door, and the priestess calls the *anito*. Then she touches the patient, sometimes applying native herbs, oil, or lime on the parts affected. The dog or pig is then killed, and the priestess prays the *anito* to take the spirit of the animal instead of the spirit of the sick person.

[791] The next morning the patient gives the priestess the beads, plates, *aliwa*, and all the articles used by her in the ceremony.

787 Auguries are practised by observing the flight and call of birds.

The various calls of the *awanac* are important. Ten different calls are distinguished and are classified as *mulad*, foretelling good fortune; or *umgad*, foretelling misfortune.

Do not jump over a child. If you do, his growth will be retarded. 784

At first glance one might think that life in Apayao is greatly restricted by the necessity of placating all the *anitos* and of observing the many auguries, omens, and prohibitions. But, after being around some, I cannot help getting the impression somehow, that all this is partly just the men's sly way to getting out of a lot of hard work and disagreeable duties. At least, the placating of the *anitos* gives them the occasion for many very pleasant social times. 771 784 787 782 781

BURIAL

When death comes, the Apayaos, unlike the Christians, do not dread it as being the end of life on this earth; for the spirit *cadudorosa*, continues to exist somewhere and enjoy many of their physical pleasures without the discomforts. The people respect these spirits and go to great pains to see that they are made happy, both during the funeral ceremony and also during the following years. At all the feasts a portion of the best food and *basi* is placed on a plate, which is then set near the stove where the immediate supply of rice is kept. The people want to keep the spirits of their ancestors happy and contented for, if one should become discontented, he will select a person in the house to keep him company. The person then becomes sick and will die if a feast is not held to make that spirt happy and contented again. 761 775 769 [753]

When a person dies, all the relatives immediately gather in his house and hold a *callas* in his memory. 764